

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ASUNCI 01633 292227Z

70

ACTION ITF-05

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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4829

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 1633

FOR AMBASSADOR BROWN FROM LANDAU

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: AEMG, PA

SUBJECT: RESETTLEMENT OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

REF: STATE 97854

1. I HAD A LENGTHY CONVERSATION WITH FONMIN SAPENA PASTOR APRIL 29 ON RESETTLEMENT OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. IN MAKING MY DEMARCHE, I STRESSED THAT PARAGUAY IS ONE OF THE FEW IF NOT THE ONLY COUNTRY WHERE THE LEGISLATURE RECENTLY HAD PASSED A UNANIMOUS RESOLUTION CONDEMNING COMMUNIST AGGRESSION AGAINST SOUTH VIETNAM. I ADDED THAT PARAGUAY, AS STRONGLY ANTI-COMMUNIST AND AS A LONG TIME ALLY OF SOUTH VIETNAM, HAD A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ASSIST WITH THE RESETTLEMENT IN WHICHEVER WAY IT COULD.

2. SAPENA PASTOR, WHILE SYMPATHETIC, QUESTIONED HOW A POOR COUNTRY LIKE PARAGUAY COULD BE HELPFUL. REFERRING TO THE ALARMING SHORTAGE OF DOCTORS IN THE INTERIOR, I SUGGESTED THAT THEY TAKE VIETNAMESE OR POSSIBLY CAMBODIANS WITH PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS. WHEN SAPENA QUESTIONED THE WISDOM OF RE-

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ASUNCI 01633 292227Z

CATIONS. WHEN SAPENA QUESTIONED THE WISDOM OF RE-

SETTLING AN ALIEN RACE WITH DIFFERENT CULTURES, TRADITIONS AND LANGUAGE IN PARAGUAY, I POINTED TO THE JAPANESE FARMING COMMUNITY AS A THRIVING GROUP WHICH INTRODUCED SOYBEANS TO PARAGUAY - NOW THE COUNTRY'S CHIEF EXPORT EARNER. SAPENA ADMITTED THAT THE JAPANESE INDEED HAS BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL BUT RECALLED THAT THE FIRST JAPANESE SETTLERS HAD BEEN SUPPORTED FINANCIALLY BY THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT. HE DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT THERE ARE LARGE TRACTS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT LAND AVAILABLE IN WHICH AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES COULD BE SET UP. SAPENA WILL RAISE THE ENTIRE ISSUE OF VIETNAMESE RESETTLEMENT INCLUDING MY RECOMMENDATIONS WITH PRESIDENT STROESSNER ON FRIDAY, MAY 2 AND WILL THEN GIVE ME AN ANSWER.

3. COMMENT: I HOPE THAT STROESSNER WILL RECOGNIZE THAT A HUMANITARIAN GESTURE ON HIS PART WILL BE HELPFUL IN BRIGHTENING HIS SOMEWHAT TRANISHED INTERNATIONAL IMAGE AND FOR THAT REASON MAKE A FAVORABLE DECISION. IN ADDITION, BY CAREFULLY SELECTING THE RIGHT TYPE OF IMMIGRANTS PARAGUAY COULD GET SOME PRACTICAL BENEFITS. THERE IS A TREMENDOUS SHORTAGE OF MEDICAL DOCTORS IN THE INTERIOR OF THE COUNTRY AND A FOREIGN DOCTOR COULD PERFORM WELL WITH ONLY RUDIMENTARY SPANISH. MOREOVER PERSONS WITH EXPERIENCE IN FARMING COULD MAKE A GO OF IT AS PROVEN BY THE JAPANESE COLONIES. END COMMENT

4. ACTION REQUESTED: I WONDER WHETHER ANY OF THE INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES REFERRED TO IN PARA 3 OF REFTEL WOULD BE ABLE TO SUPPORT THE START OF A VIETNAMESE AGRICULTURAL COLONY. PARAGUAY NEEDS EXPERIENCED FARMERS AND ALIEN FARMING COLONIES HAVE TRADITIONALLY MADE OUT WELL AFTER THEY GOT OVER THE FIRST FEW YEARS. IF AN INTERNATIONAL AGENCY COULD LEND INITIAL SUPPORT TO A VIETNAMESE FARMING COLONY, I BELIEVE THAT PARAGUAY COULD TAKE A SIZEABLE NUMBER OF QUALIFIED REFUGEES. IT IS WELL TO REMEMBER THAT PARAGUAY, EVER SINCE 1929, HAS BEEN A HAVEN FOR MENNONITE SETTLERS WHO NOW NUMBER ABOUT 12,000 AND ARE PROSPERING.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 ASUNCI 01633 292227Z

5. I SHALL REPORT AFTER I HEAR FROM SAPENA BUT MEANWHILE WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION TO MY SUGGESTIONS. IF POSITIVE I MIGHT APPROACH PRESIDENT STROESSNER DIRECTLY.
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